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PUBLICATION OFFICE: Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 W. Broad St., Richmond, Virginia

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COVER: Blue herons, by Arthur F. LaMay of Sterling, Virginia.

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EDITORIAL

A Return to Reality

RECENT shortages of food and fuel have had a humbling effect which should be good for the whole country. Long used to casually picking our choice meats from gleaming coolers in air-conditioned supermarkets, we are greeted by empty shelves and TV scenes of slaughterhouses closing down. Most city dwellers are now acutely aware of where their beef comes from. Pickers' strikes and flood-ravaged fields are seen to have their effects at the vegetable counter. Decimating blizzards and droughts that produced the piles of beef carcasses shown on TV documentaries last year can be seen to have contributed to current prices and shortages. Grain sales to foreign countries to alleviate world hunger may yet force us to pay more for our own loaves of bread, but we in turn rely on some of these same countries for petroleum to ease our gasoline and fuel oil shortages.

In short, we are learning that the earth's resources are all one big ball of wax, and the world population has reached the point where we all feel its pressures on these resources. We can finally see quite clearly that the resources of the United States and of the world are finite, and we can no longer let our demands on these resources go unchecked.

I once read an analogy that each new pound of human flesh added to the earth means that a given number of pounds of natural biological life must be sacrificed to maintain it. Woods, meadows and prairies must be converted to paper pulp, lumber, beef, corn, wheat, and energy so that that pound of flesh can be fed, clothed, sheltered, heated, cooled, entertained and moved from place to place. Our individual impact on the environment may be greater than we suspect.

These recent events should bring home to everyone that we are all a part of the ecology of the planet and as limited by it as is the number of cows that may survive on a given acreage of pasture or the number of quail that can survive on a certain farm. We may be clever enough to exploit our habitat to the fullest, but when that level is reached, something has to give.—H.L.G.

LETTERS

Swimmer's Surprise

WHILE swimming recently after dark in a lake in Calvert County, Maryland, my wife was bitten twice on the inside of her thigh by something that in the dark looked like a snake. The bites were of semi-circular shape with some skin broken.

The consensus of opinions was that my wife was bitten by a water snake, a species known for its aggressiveness. However, it was agreed that a case of a water snake attacking a swimming person is quite unusual.

Does the staff of *Virginia Wildlife* or any of its readers have any knowledge of similar occurrences in our area?

George Winterhalter
Falls Church

While it is known that water snakes, including the poisonous cottonmouth (which is not found in Maryland or in most of Virginia), will bite underwater, we don't have any record of such attacks on humans in Virginia.—Ed.

Inflated Demands

I read with sympathetic interest and appreciation the article in the August issue by J. E. Thornton concerning the Gathright Wildlife Management Area.

Personally, I share Mr. Thornton's feelings, even though I have never visited the Gathright Area and can rely only on his word pictures and other descriptions of this lonely, wild area. What perhaps has not been recognized and that even now receives no adequate emphasis is the decisive part that inflation and its handmaiden, inflated desires, have had in matters of this sort. It should be obvious that inflation creates demands of such gargantuan proportions that, finally, any attempt to satisfy them becomes an absurdity!

Thus, Gathright becomes a sacrifice, and there is no assurance whatever that the assumed and promised benefits of its transformation can ever outweigh its previous qualities.

L. P. Bragg, M.D.
Hampton

Loaded Question

WHEN using the percussion rifle, if I remove the percussion cap when you would normally unload a regular rifle, such as in crossing a state road and in other restricted areas, would the weapon be considered unloaded?

Thomas Simpson
Annandale

With the possible exception of federal refuges and military areas, it is lawful to carry a loaded gun on a road or in a vehicle virtually anywhere in the state. It is an extremely dangerous practice and responsible for several deaths and injuries each year. Our wardens would consider a percussion weapon without a cap as unloaded, and I suppose federal agents would also.—Ed.

BOWHUNTING *HOT SPOT*

By W. R. McCABE III
Chester

THAT time of year is fast approaching when bowhunters come out of hiding. If you're one of the clan and would like to find a place to hunt, where deer are as thick as rabbits, let me tell you what happened to me a few years back, on my first bowhunt for deer.

Tired from working the "hoot owl" shift, I punched the clock out at 8 p.m. in the nylon fibers plant where I work. As I crossed the parking lot, Tracy Christopher, a bowhunting companion of mine, called out, "Hey, did you get it?" "Yes, got it yesterday," "What days did you get?" he asked. "The last two," I answered. "Great, me too."

We were talking about hunting on the Presquile National Wildlife Refuge. We both had sent post cards to the refuge office to be in a drawing in which 400 bowhunters would receive permits for a two-day hunt.

After talking over the matter for a short time, we parted. On my way home I saw my neighbor, John Hendricks, climbing off his new combine. I stopped on the roadside and asked if he had received his permit yet.

John is a 24-year-old farmer, and just as good a hunter as anyone in these parts. He has credit for 18 deer, all downed with his old 12-gauge shotgun. I knew when he was walking across his cornfield that he had his permit by that grin on his sun-tanned face.

"Yes," were his first words, "but I bet I can't hit the broad side of a barn with that toothpick slinger."

After John said he had gotten the same days that Tracy and I had been assigned for the hunt, I drove home to do a little practice with broadheads. I've found that an old bed mattress and a few bales of hay to back it up will make a fine stopping place for a razor head. It will not mess up your arrows or fletching. You may find an old unused mattress in any local trash pile or city dump. After setting your mattress up, with very little art talent you can draw a full-sized deer. Then all you are lacking to go along with this is the bowhunter's worst disease: buck fever.

Four weeks passed and I found myself rolling out of bed at 3:30 a.m. on a cold November morning ready for the hunt. I put on my long-johns and all the trimmings, then pulled my 60-inch bow from the rack. I picked up John, then drove 12 miles to meet the two-car, cable-operated ferryboat that was to carry 100 hunters to the island.

Tracy was there to meet us. At 5:00 o'clock the refuge manager crossed the 300-yard channel. After all permits were checked, the band of bowhunters crossed the channel to the island. It looked like D-Day for the wise and crafty whitetail.

After we arrived, some hunters went to their already prepared stands. John, Tracy, and I waited at the ferry till all were gone to the back fields, then we separated and went to our own little hot spot, where we hoped to bag that trophy buck. None of us had ever shot at a deer with a bow before, and even a doe would do just as well.

After I arrived and settled down in a grapevine thicket that I chose as a blind, the eastern sky was just beginning to show some sign of light over the treetops. Migrating geese and ducks winging their way south for the winter had stirred up quite a commotion among wildlife sensing the coming of day, and already the wings of mallards and teal whistled overhead as they carried the birds to neighboring swamps that surround the island.

Presquile is located in the middle of the James River just a few miles south of Richmond, Virginia. The island consists of about 1,500 acres and has an excess of deer. I was doing my part in conservation to lessen the strain on the corn crop that is planted for the migrating birds. It seems that the deer come to the island by swimming the river from nearby lowlands and farms. Also, the increased population and industrial plants located on the river are closing in on them. There is an estimated herd of 200 deer on the small island. This is a large number considering that the island has only three-hundred acres of agricultural farm lands and most of the surrounding land is underwater or very wet with little browse to be eaten.

The island was man-made in 1935 by cutting across a farm located on a peninsula to make a shorter and deeper waterway for large ships going to Richmond's docks. In 1957, the owner of the farm gave it to the Fish and Wildlife Service for the purpose of establishing a game refuge. When the conservationists took over the island, the fields made a perfect feeding place for the 30,000 geese and ducks that visit it every year. In 1967 the conservationists found that the deer herds were just too large for the island because before the corn crop and grain were full grown the deer would eat the young tops and destroy most of it, leaving no grain for the geese.

Hours passed for me in the blind, and after one unsuccessful shot at a running deer at 30 to 40 yards I was a little hot at myself.

On my way back I met John and Tracy and told them of my bad luck. They had not shot at any deer but had seen a few. I suggested that we make a drive along another narrow point that runs out in the river. There, maybe one of us would get a shot. John covered the right edge of the point which was 100 yards wide and Tracy, the other side. I drove down to the point and didn't jump any deer. Coming back up the water's edge toward John, I almost fell over two doe lying in the high grass. Surprised and bewildered, they ran straight for John. I hollered to let him know they were coming. He was backed up beside a small tree. John saw the deer, and he missed them clean as a whistle.

"Doggone it," he said, "those deer passed me within spitting range." Looking over to where he was pointing, I saw a wad of chewing tobacco. He must have almost swallowed that plug when he missed.

That day we went home empty handed, but a lot of other hunters had scored. Sixteen deer were killed that first day. "I'll be back tomorrow for the last hunt," I said.

I was scheduled off work the next day, but Tracy had to work. John, who was a little hot under the collar, said he had better stay home and work on his old hay baler. So that left me. I told them I might go back because I just had to stick an arrow in some old buck skin.

The alarm clock rang and I rose soon afterwards. During the ferry crossing I decided to hunt the large cornfield, for that would be where the deer were feeding. I settled down in the field and waited till dawn came. As I started my stalk, a loud crash came just a few feet away. All I saw was a white flash, so I stopped and listened for awhile. I could hear deer all around me walking in the corn. The sounds were driving me mad, but I couldn't see a thing. I looked up the long corn row and saw the rear end of a large deer. Halfway up the row, without presenting a good shot, the deer moved over to the next row. Then without a sound I inched my way up the row slowly. I stuck my head through the next row to see if it was there. Sure enough, there were three doe standing there looking at me, so I looked back without a move. They began to walk on up the cornfield and were out of sight in a few seconds.

I went to the edge of the field and walked down the side of the corn rows about 100 yards. I hoped to cross over through the rows one at a time, to see if I would come upon them again. I began my slow crossing. First looking up a row and then down, I would cross the row. After looking through about 20 rows, I came upon a large deer standing about 40 yards up the row with its whole body showing in the middle of the row. Its head was sticking through the other row. The animal didn't even know I was there. I had a perfect target! It was just like shooting down a bowling alley. I stepped out in the center of the corn row. I slowly pulled back on my 45-pound Ben Pearson and gave the arrow point a little lift over the deer's shoulder. Zoom! The arrow went on, on, on to its target. It seemed like a year watching it cut through the air slowly, arching its way to the . . . smack! . . . a hit! The deer exploded, then crashed through the corn. I could hear it breaking the dry corn stalks as it went.

There were no more sounds, so I waited about five minutes then went to look where the deer was last standing. There was a broken red arrow lying on the ground in the next row. I picked it up to examine it and, to my surprise, it was mine! A gray, micro-flint arrow soaked with blood. It had white hair on the broad head that told me the arrow had penetrated the deer's body low in the chest. It must have broken off when the deer jumped through the corn. I walked in the direction the deer had run and within 30 yards found a nice doe lying on the ground: my first deer!

The arrow had penetrated both lungs and cut a main artery. I found the second half of the arrow sticking out of the other side of the deer with only the feathers holding it in.

There have been a few changes made in the past six years of hunting. Hunters are allowed to go by boat to stands in the swamps. The fields are now leased to a farmer and crops are harvested, leaving only one-fourth standing.

Perhaps you would like to lend a bow hand in reducing Presquile's nuisance deer population. If so, it is necessary to apply by mid-September to Box 658, Hopewell, for a permit or take your chance on a cancellation at the ferry landing. There is also a limited amount of gun hunting by permit. This year's bowhunt season dates are October 15-16, 19-20, 26-27 with gun hunting permitted on November 7 and 9.

Bowhunter waits in a cornfield blind—a typical hunting situation on the Presquile National Wildlife Refuge.

Commission photo by Kesteloo

Persimmons

Commission photo by Kesteloo

WILD COOKING

By ELIZABETH MURRAY
Charlottesville

FROM time to time over the past four years, I have referred to the edibility of some of the plants I was describing, and many readers have written to ask for my recipes. I thought, therefore, it might be appropriate to talk here about ways of preparing some wild food. I shall only describe methods which I have tried myself and served frequently.

Easily heading the list of requests were those for my persimmon bread recipe, and I am very happy to talk about this since it is a great favorite in our household too. Also, I had to learn a great deal about persimmons. Coming from a foreign country, I did not grow up with the folklore which surrounds persimmons, but I soon learned it. I was told that just when persimmons looked their juciest, the flesh was extremely "puckery" to taste—true—very true, and that to harvest persimmons it was necessary to wait until after the first frost which eradicated the pucker—not necessarily true. The farmland around us in Albemarle County has many groups of persimmon trees (*Diospyros virginiana L.,* belonging to the ebony family) which bear heavily in late fall. It seemed a pity to waste the crop. I tried to approach the problem scientifically. First I left the persimmons on the trees until after the first frost. Then I went out, only to find that almost the entire crop had fallen off and lay rotting on the ground below. I tried one of the few that remained on a tree—still puckery. The following year I gathered the fruit while it was still on the tree—very puckery. The pulp is easy to obtain by pushing the fruit through a rotary food mill, without any cooking. I put some of the pulp in the deep freezer. After a week of artificial frost, I thawed it and tasted—still puckery. I left some of the pulp around the kitchen to age more naturally. After two weeks it had grown a rich coating of mold. I scraped off the mold and reached for the orange pulp beneath—still puckery. In despair I took all the available pulp, puckery as it was, dumped it into a batch of persimmon bread and threw it into the oven. With bated breath I carved the first slice of the result. Hurray! It was delicious, with not a trace of pucker.

So now at last I know what to do with persimmons, and the procedure is routine in my household. The fruit is picked straight from the tree in late fall or early winter when it is somewhat wrinkled and withered-looking, but still juicy, and pulped immediately. If not used at once, the pulp can be deep frozen just as it is.

The batter for the bread is very easy. A cup of sugar (brown or white) is creamed together with six ounces margarine. Two eggs are beaten in and then two cups of flour and one teaspoonful of soda added. Finally, at least one generous cup of persimmon pulp (more is acceptable) is stirred in. The mixture is spread into two one-pound loaf pans lined with wax paper and baked for one hour at 325°. The pulp darkens on heating so the result is deep brown loaves from which the wax paper can be peeled while they are still quite warm. When cold they can be thinly sliced and spread lightly with butter, to the great enjoyment of anyone present. The recipe can be doubled and the extra loaves stored in the freezer without impairment. Chopped nuts can be added to the bread, but I am lazy about shelling our own hickories, and it seems almost cheating to buy walnuts at the store. Besides, we like it just as it is.

I always feel that September ought to be the blackberry month because it is in England. However, in Virginia they are pretty well over by August. But with all the rain this year it was possible to freeze plenty for use later. We also had a huge crop of June apples so there was ample opportunity for deep dish blackberry and apple pie. But the best thing of all to do with blackberries is to make homemade blackberry ice cream in a proper old-fashioned ice cream freezer. I make the blackberry syrup out of a quart of berries with about ¾ cup of water. This is stewed together for a few minutes and then "mercilessly flogged" (a cooking term I always enjoy!) through a sieve so that much of the pulp goes through, but the seeds do not. Not being a complete purist, I add at this point (while the syrup is still hot) an envelope of soaked gelatin, the juice of half a lemon, and a cupful of sugar. I am particular about using real cream and not evaporated milk, and when the syrup is cool I add a cup of heavy cream (if possible a cup of light cream too) and then freeze the whole lot in the ice cream freezer. The recipe can also be used for dewberries, black raspberries and wild grapes. Although I am a great devotee of the deep freezer, I think that there are two things which really are better if not kept frozen for too long, and one is fresh fruit ice cream. The other is fish. The small bass

and bluegills which we catch out of a nearby pond form some of our staple food during the summertime, and we try to eat them as soon as possible after catching.

Wild vegetables are harder to find at the end of the summer, and besides, this is a time when one's own cultivated vegetable garden is burgeoning with good things. But in the early part of the year wild greens can be a fine addition to one's table. We are very fond of Dry Land Cress, sometimes known as Winter Cress, Mustard Greens or Yellow Rocket. There are two species of *Barbarea* (belonging to the Cruciferae) which are commonly eaten as land cress, *Barbarea vulgaria* and *B. verna*. When a farmer's wife here first pointed out cress to me ("creases," she called it), she showed me two distinct leaf forms and said that one was delicious and the other was called "bull sallit" and was very bitter. I have since tried both forms, boiling them in two lots of water to reduce any bitterness, and they are both delicious. I am inclined to think any member of the genus is probably palatable. The genus is called after St. Barbara, either because the seeds had to be planted on St. Barbara's Day, in early December, or because there was nothing else to harvest at that time. Round here it can be found as early as February, the only bright green clumps in a sea of winter dullness, and it forms a very tasty colorful vegetable that almost everyone enjoys.

We are not obsessional about wild food. We do not, like a Washington friend, have *Phytolacca* roots growing in our basement in order to enjoy the shoots year round. But we do like an occasional spring dish of what is called locally "poke sallit." Pokeweed shoots must be picked very young when they are scarcely above ground, and boiled in two lots of water. They are good, but by the time they are too high in the wild to eat, it is time anyway to be turning to other things.

By this time the summer is on the wane, and the blackberries, dewberries and black raspberries are in, it is time to go out with the blueberry pot. And if it is a good year for blueberries, who cares about any of the rigors that winter may bring?

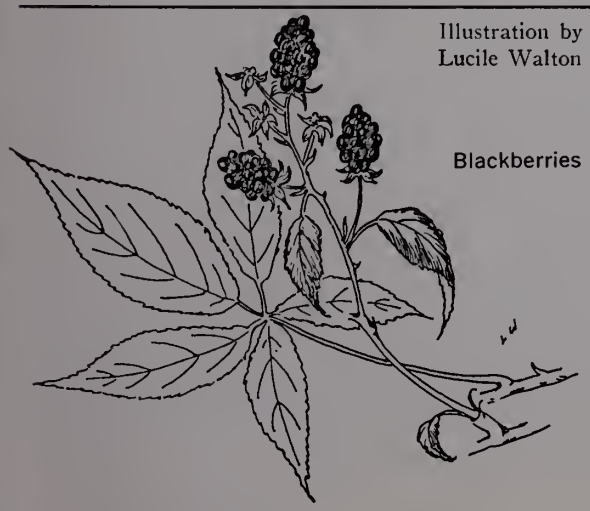


Illustration by Lucile Walton

Blackberries

By MARJORIE LATHAM MASSELIN
Richmond

THERE are those who sing of Paris in the Springtime and England when April's there, but *I* say the scene to make is the Virginia Woodlands in Autumn, and plan to get there at least two jumps ahead of the squirrels.

Just right now I am mourning the passing of the pecan tree which stood at the rear of the yard next door. It overreached itself, ran afoul of the public utilities people, and now lies neatly piled in two-foot lengths.

The pecan, of course, is only one member of the hickory family and not really native this far north. The shagbark hickory, if you can find one, is the true prize of the hickory hierarchy in our forests here. It is the shagbark that yields the finest nuts from a people point of view, and it is this kind of hickory nut that one sometimes finds in local markets. Well, they are good, too; but, like all figuratively stolen fruits, their goodness multiplies a hundredfold when one gathers them in the wild and carts a basket home ruddy cheeked from the exertion in crisp autumn air, and bright eyed in expectation of a bowlful to be cracked and nibbled of an evening while cold rain whips at the shutters, the fire dances in the grate, and that piping hot squirrel stew, enjoyed at dinner, settles comfortably in the stomach.

Now, before you all scatter to attic and cellar in search of warm clothing and the peach basket saved from that canning spree last August, hold on a minute, because there are a couple of other nut trees, native to Virginia, that are also worth knowing about. These are the black walnut and the butternut. These nuts are extremely hard shelled, and it requires great care, time and patience to extract their kernels. A fully cooperative family of four, all willing to work at it, will, at the outside limit, make good use of half a bushel. In the case of the butternut, somewhat less, I should think, because it is not a good keeper and becomes rancid rather quickly.

The fall of the year, when the leaves are turning, is the ideal time for a nutting expedition. If you go too early, the nut will still be green and hanging tree-bound in unopened husks. Since nut trees do not bear in youth and since mature trees grow to phenomenal heights, there is little you can do but wait for Nature to drop the ripe nuts from their splitting husks, quite literally in your lap.

Of the three trees discussed here (that is, excluding the pecan which is not native to Virginia and unlikely to turn up in the woods except where civilization has been and planted them), the butternut is the most fragile. It has a short trunk and low crown; its sweeping branches are easily damaged by wind and ice; its leaves fall early and its nuts turn rancid rather rapidly; it never achieves the height or the age of its more famous cousin, and is often called the black walnut's "poor relation." The kernel is soft and oily and beastly difficult to pry out because there are as many nooks and crannies, twists and turning inside the shell as outside, but oh, the delight when one finally succeeds in filling a cup and carries it into the kitchen to stir up a batch of penuche!

To make some, ideally that is, one requires not only the cup of nut meats, but heavy cream, real butter and maple sugar. Brown sugar can be used if one cannot get maple, but I urge you to make the effort and procure a brick of real maple sugar. Maple sugar gets very hard, just as brown sugar will, if not kept in an air-tight container, but it softens in a warm oven as brown sugar does and, in any case, the cream will dissolve it. The candy, of course, is very rich, very sweet and calorie laden, but it is divine to eat, and, despite what Vermonters tell you to the contrary, the recipe has to have been devised in Hera's kitchen on Mt. Olympus.

Butternut Fudge (Penuche)

¼ cup butter
2 cups maple sugar
¾ cup thick cream
1 cup butternut kernels
Salt if you like, but the butter probably will supply enough.

Combine the above in a heavy saucepan of comfortably large proportions and stir over moderate heat until the sugar dissolves, the butter melts, and the whole thing comes to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Then cook without stirring to the soft ball stage. This takes *about* 15 minutes of careful watching. When it tests out to a soft ball in a cup of cold water, take it off heat and let it cool undisturbed. Beat until smooth and it begins to hold a shape. Then stir in the nut meats and press into a buttered plate. Mark into squares and start sampling.

Black walnuts are ready for harvesting in late September and October. The nut meat has a very characteristic flavor that is vaguely spicy and which cooking does not in any way destroy. The Latin name for the black walnut translates to "Jupiter's Acorn," so you see I am not alone in thinking of wild nuts as food for the gods.

Perhaps the best way to use black walnuts is in the justly famous "Black Walnut Ice Cream" served at Williamsburg taverns. The recipe is in the new edition of the Williamsburg Cookbook, but you can make it rather simply by using a premium quality commercial ice cream and folding in the fresh shelled nutmeats. Press it into a melon mold or serve it in slabs atop warm apple pie. Black walnuts also belong in "Brownies" and they make the greatest of syrup pies—far superior, we think, to those made with pecans.

Hickory trees are common throughout most of the eastern part of the country. They rarely occur in stands and are usually found growing among oaks and other deciduous trees. They get even taller than black walnuts, like twenty feet taller, which is pretty tall. The nuts are released from their husks when ripe, and they have a thin dull brown shell with a light spot on one end. Inside is a single kernel. The tricky part of shelling hickory nuts is that, after hammering away at black walnuts, your inclination is to whack too hard and smash the hickory kernel to a pulp.

The kernel can be eaten with the brown skin left on, or it can be blanched, like almonds, and then roasted, like chestnuts. At least the recipe books *say* this is so. They never last long enough round here for me to try it.

Once in awhile I can get enough together on the sly to grind and make into tart shells. To do this, just add the ground nuts to your favorite rich pastry dough. Make the shells quite small because they are fragile to handle. Then fill each with a spoonful of real lemon curd, top with twice as much meringue as lemon filling, and brown in a 375 degree oven.

Lemon Curd is Hollandaise with sugar in it. I mean the cooking principle is the same. It is a very old English teatime treat that dates well back in history. Old cookbooks often call it Lemon "Cheese." I have no idea why either name took root; the stuff is smooth as silk and perfectly simple to achieve with a wire whisk and a double boiler. Just whisk together ½ cup butter softened at room temperature, the yolks of 4 eggs, 1 cup of sugar and the juice of 2-3 lemons, depending on how juicy they happen to be. Some are always much better than others, no matter how long one spends selecting them. It should be cooked only until it thickens and, like Hollandaise, it will destroy itself if it is overcooked. Some cooks add grated zest of the lemon, too, but I think this makes the filling bitter rather than tart, and in any case I prefer to bite down on a chunk of hickory nut in the tart shell, not a hunk of lemon peel in the filling.

SPINNERBAITS SPELL BASS

By BILL COCHRAN
Roanoke

SEVERAL years back, when the plastic worm came on the angling scene and this soft, seductive offering gained an amazing hard core of fishermen followers, I made a statement I may soon have to eat. Said I, "Never in the history of angling will there be another lure to create such a revolutionary impact on bass and bass fishermen."

Now comes the spinnerbait or spinnerjig or safety pin. Call it what you will, it rapidly is becoming one of the most popular, productive and versatile bass-getting lures ever to tangle up in a tackle box.

Spinnerbaits aren't new. Old-timers tell me they've been made commercially ever since the First World War. The first ones I saw were homemade jobs being turned out of the basement of Fred Pugh's place in Vinton. My friend Fred would praise their fish-catching ability, and often would return home from a local reservoir grinning and bearing a wide-eyed, gaping-mouthed lunker bass as proof that he knew what he was talking about.

Somehow, for several years, it made little impression on me. How could anything as ridiculous looking and gaudy as a spinnerbait catch bass?

The spinnerbait has about as many trinkets on it as a lavishly dressed Christmas tree. It basically is a lead-headed, jig-like lure with a wire projecting out from its head and bent back toward the hook, giving it something of the appearance of a safety pin. Onto the wire is attached a single or double spinner. The tail of the jig is dressed with a rubberized skirt or bucktail. Most times fishermen will hang a piece of pork rind or plastic worm onto the hook, just in case Mr. Bass might overlook the rest of the contraption.

Here's a lure that has a little something for almost every desire a bass might have. The spinners give off vibrations and flash. The tail weaves about as a seductive come-on. The pork rind or worm attached throws in a piece of meat at a time when meat prices are skyrocketing.

Still, for several years, spinnerbaits rode in the dungeon part of my big tackle box, where it is dark and damp and seldom does a kind hand reach. Then I became interested in winter bass angling. Come December at impoundments like Smith Mountain and Leesville, I found, if you work spinnerbaits along the shoreline where the banks drop rapidly into deep water, you'll be rewarded with some hot fishing to warm the most bone-chilling day.

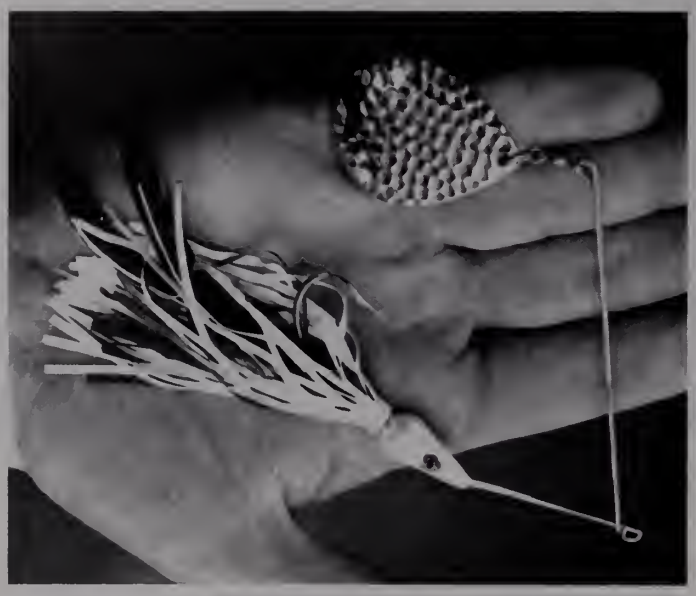
Spinnerbaits work well for this type angling for at least two important reasons. First, they sink rapidly, which means they'll tumble straight down to that bass lying deep along the edge of a rocky bank, cliff or sharp drop-off, favorite early winter hiding places. And they go to work immediately as they sink, spinners flashing and vibrating, tails waving, pork rind or worm wiggling.

Secondly, you can fish them painfully slow. Often a bass will strike them as they sink. If not, you continue to let them bounce downward, from one rock or limb or root to the next. Then you retrieve them simply by raising the tip of your rod, reeling in the slack line, then lowering the rod tip to let the lure flutter down part way again, then raising the rod tip.

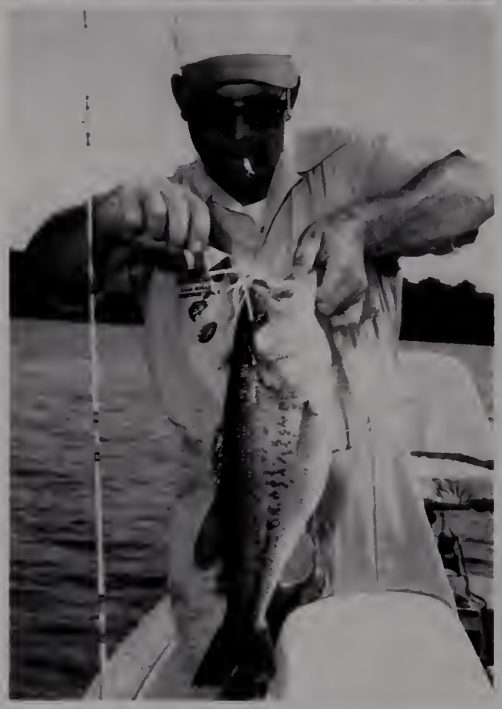
Winterbound bass often won't move far or fast to capture even a tasty-looking dish, so precision casts and slow retrieves are important techniques. I soon found that the same techniques work well during March, when increasing sunlight and warming water temperatures begin to move the bass to the banks.

But it was not until more recently that I found the spinnerbait to be an excellent spring-through-fall lure as well. That lesson came from Rufus Eubank, a master guide who has spent the past couple of years at Kerr Reservoir.

My lesson came one bright day in June. Early spring, fed fat by runoff, Kerr Reservoir had puffed and swollen itself back into the wilderness of willows along its shoreline, taking its sizeable population of scaly-chested largemouth bass with it. Then came June, and the 50,000-acre lake began to recede rapidly, drawing the largemouth out of the wood-tick tangles and back into



Spinnerbait.



Rufus devised the spinnerbait that caught this spunky Kerr Reservoir largemouth in June.

Rufus retrieves spinnerbait, flashing and splashing it across the surface making it look like school of frolicking baitfish.

casting range, offering some of the best fishing this side of South Carolina's famed Santee-Cooper.

The whole act was met with grinning approval by Rufus who invited me for a day of buzzing for bass. "Buzzing for bass?" That was a question on my mind as I made the three-hour drive from Roanoke. Buzzing for bass, Rufus was to show me, was simply casting a spinner bait back into the willows and reeling it rapidly across the surface so it flashes and splashes, taunting otherwise lazy lunkers out of the cover with open mouth and fiery eyes.

Rufus told me, and later convinced me, that the spinnerbait is the most weedless surface lure ever devised. The bass were hugging the partially submerged brush that forms the rugged shoreline of cover-rich points along the oozing edges of spots like Grassy Creek, Rudds Creek and Eastland Creek.

Bass love Kerr's brushland, and bass fishermen can cast to it expecting alligator-size rolls, and not be disappointed. The idea, Rufus explained, is to cast your lure right smack into the middle of the willows. An opening no bigger than the mouth of a five-gallon bucket can hold a lunker.

I'd fished plastic worms at Kerr this way, but never spinnerbaits. But it works. We lured bass out of tangles so thick it looked as if they would be carrying cockleburs.

In comparison to most surface lure fishing, and especially to deep-water spinnerbait angling, bass buzzing is blazing fast. Other top-water lures, for example, often are worked painfully slow, with a caster lighting up and smoking half a cigarette between twitches of his rod. While the slow retrieve of a floating lure to top-water trickery that probably makes a bass think a bug or small land animal has fallen into the water, the fast, flashing and splashing return of a spinnerbait must look like a school of baitfish driven to the surface. Whatever, it can send bass boiling up from the willow roots to shatter the surface—and tranquillity—as they gulp in the offering. This type fishing lasts from spring to fall, Rufus has discovered, with peak periods enjoyed May and June, then again in October.

But what about impoundments like Smith Mountain where brush is scant? Spinnerbaits work well there April and May, Roland Martin, the leading Bass Angler Sportsman Society (BASS) tournament winner from Tulsa, Oklahoma, taught me one April day.

That afternoon, we found the bass back in the tail of coves, often in water about three feet deep. Roland would cast a bright green spinnerbait to the rear of the coves and retrieve it fast, letting it work just under the surface, much the same way you would cast and reel a fly and spinner.

Explained Martin, "You can cover a lot more

(Continued next page)

Spinnerbaits (Continued from page 10)

water with a spinnerbait. It is especially good in shallow-water coves on rainy or cloudy days. Make a long cast so as not to spook the bass."

Thus, it appears that if a bass angler were limited to a single lure, his choice would not be a bad one if he'd pick the spinnerbait. It is productive from the surface to the bottom, from spring to winter, and anywhere in between.

The past two or three years, numerous lure makers have manufactured a variety of spinnerbaits, giving them aggressive names such as Tarantula, Aggravator, Sure Slayer, Wooly Bully, Bushwacker and Machete. Although slightly different in looks, most will do a good job.

As for colors, I like solid black, and sometimes yellow, in March. For spring, a bright green, even chartreuse, is a favorite. For buzzing, white or yellow or light green is good. For winter fishing, a green and white combination has been good to me. Like with angling any lure, don't argue with the bass. Give them what they want.

When I started out with spinnerbaits, I'd always attach a piece of pork rind to the hook. Then, I discovered that about a four-inch chunk of plastic worm would do as well. Worms are easier to carry and less expensive than pork.

For fishing shallow coves, when the spinnerbait is retrieved fairly rapidly just under the surface, there are times when it is best to use no worm or pork rind on the hook at all.

Like most spinnerbait fishermen, I find that these lures work best when offered with bait casting outfits, levelwind reels, and fairly stiff rods. When retrieving the lure rapidly on or near the surface, the new five-to-one retrieve ratio casting reels are tops. For the slow work of early spring and winter, regular bait-casting reels are excellent. These also can be used for surface fishing if the spool is wound full to cut down the number of cranks necessary to bring the spinnerbait across the surface. Many fishermen have had fine results with spinning outfits.

Most spinnerbaits have been made in the approximately one-half ounce bracket, but now come offerings one-fourth ounce and even down to smallish characters that can catch crappie and sunfish. Thus, the spinnerbait not only is a versatile lure for bass, but also is proving itself for other species. I'm willing to bet it can do things anglers have yet to even think about. Then its impact on angling may be greater than that of the plastic worm, and I'll have some words to eat.

Photo by Leonard Lee Rue III

Sci, the Fox Squirrel

SCIURUS NIGER

By CARSTEN AHRENS
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

SCI'S fur was a rusty brown all over except around around the edges where it faded to a pale yellow. He was a fox squirrel of eastern United States; his cousins to the north were greyish white while those to the south inclined to blackish, especially across the face, though their noses and ears were white.

Sci had been born that April along with two brothers and Sissy in a generous cavity of a tremendous swamp white oak; the tree was so old that when George Washington was a boy, it already looked over the trees in the surrounding forest. Sci and Sissy never wearied of playing tag during that first summer. They chased each other about the great horizontal limbs that formed

The author is a retired high school biology teacher and National Park ranger-naturalist.

avenues that led to neighboring trees and on to others, so that the pair of them could travel over several acres without touching the ground.

Fox squirrels have sturdy, well-developed limbs that have four toes in front and five toes behind. They terminate in sharp claws that make it possible to climb any tree faster than they generally move on the ground. They found the heavily-ridged bark of the ancient oak especially easy to negotiate. But their pride, of course, was the arching, "plumey" tail which (1) acted as the balancing organ when they made their spectacular leaps from tree to tree and which (2) covered them snugly when they curled up during their long periods of hibernation.

By mid-June Sissy and her three brothers were allowed to play on the broad limbs near the cavity where their mother could watch them. When she went looking for food, she ordered them inside. The hazel-, hickory-, and walnuts she had stored the autumn before were consumed. The scores of nuts she had buried were difficult to find—the long winter had taken away their pungent odor. She had to go farther and farther afield to find food for the ever-hungry quartet.

What had once been a forest was now a woodlot owned by an old man who came each summer and lived in a one-room shack near the oak. The fox squirrel family often visited his bird feeder, especially when the gang of hard-nosed rusty blackbirds was away. There they often found strange but delicious foods, like potato chips and popcorn, which made their ordinary foods—acorns, seeds, nuts, buds and the underbark of trees, an occasional bird's egg—seem ordinary indeed.

About a quarter of a mile to the south in an abandoned farm yard stood a great black walnut tree. Out of sight in the thick grass were hundreds of fallen nuts from last autumn. They were still delicious though dried and black. The faithful mother made many trips to carry home, one at a time, the hard-shelled food. It was necessary, in making the trip, to cross the highway. She cringed in the roadside weeds as she waited for the monsters that smelled bad as they roared past. Once on the road, completely flattened by the passing cars, was a dead squirrel. She recognized it as the father of the four squirrels waiting in the old oak.

One afternoon, the number of monsters on the highway kept the old squirrel from crossing until twilight. Fox squirrels, unlike their second cousins, the flying squirrels, are active only during the day, so she was late in getting home. When she finally reached the oak, both of Sci's brothers were gone. They had disobeyed orders for they were hungry, had left the safety of the cavity to look for their mother, and had been carried away by a pair of long-eared owls who had hungry young of their own in an abandoned flicker nest nearby. Mother squirrel was greeted by only Sci and Sissy.

On the first day mother squirrel led Sci and Sissy to the black walnut tree. The old man saw them by the side of the highway and figured out a plan so they wouldn't have to cross the road again for weeks. He took a bushel basket, filled it with walnuts, carried it to the woodlot, and left it at the base of the oak tree. In no time, it was empty and the nest cavity was full of nuts.

During August the sun was very warm and the cavity in the oak became too hot for fur-bearing Sci. He left home and built himself a nest of leaves and twigs high overhead in the branches of a cottonwood tree. The job took him so long that he almost forgot his mother and Sissy. When he finally went back to the old oak tree, both were gone. There was a strong odor of weasels in the cavity, and he never saw his family again.

When hunting season came, the old man put up signs that read NO HUNTING. Fox squirrels weigh as much as three pounds and are good to eat. But no one shot in the woodlot.

In the woodlot grew several hickory trees and when the nuts began to ripen, Sci became a different kind of squirrel. He completely lost any consideration for his old way of life . . . for playing and leaping from tree to tree, for swinging in his leaf nest, for climbing the screen door on the hut, crossing its roof, and coming down the window screen to the bird feeder. His collecting instincts made a slave and a miser of him. It ordered him to shuck every nut he saw and store it away. He took over the old nest and soon had it filled. He planted hundreds of nuts, many of which he forgot and they grew into more hickory trees. He rushed about madly, even running over the old man and his ancient coon hound as they lay sleeping in the fall sunshine. Sci was really weary when the cold came.

Winter found him curled up in the cavity in the old oak. He had covered himself as though he had a quilt with his furry tail. Five or six times there were warm spells that woke Sci and he cautiously explored the woodlot in its snowy dress. During these winter breaks, he ate from his stored food. He found a mate, and he hunted wherever the snow had melted for nuts he had buried. Each time the cold returned, he hurried back to his warm bed, covered himself with his tail-quilt and sank into a comfortable and deep, deep sleep.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

CONSERVATIONGRAM

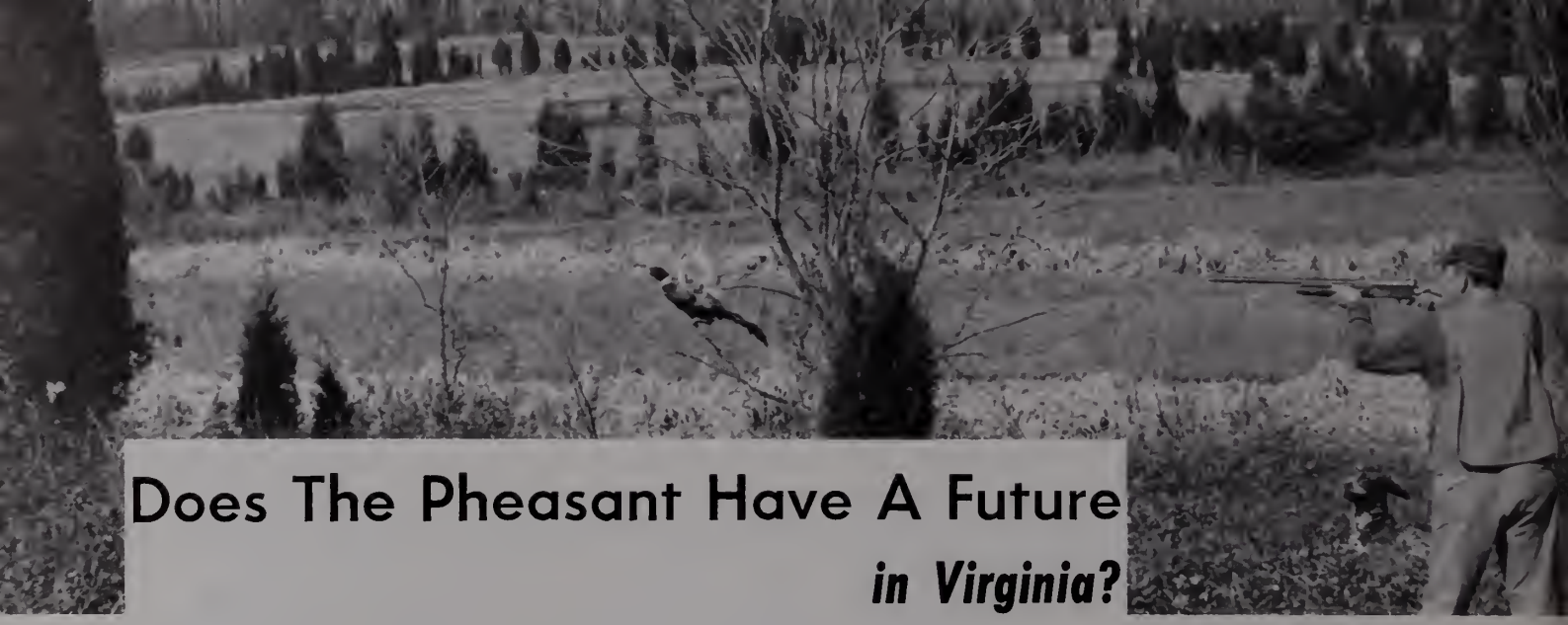
Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

GYPSY MOTH INVASION GROWS IN VIRGINIA, according to reports recently released by the United States Department of Agriculture. The tree-defoliating pests were detected for the first time in Virginia's Botetourt, Nansemond, Southampton and Westmoreland counties. Trapping this summer showed some spread of the insects which were previously reported in Accomack, Frederick, Gloucester, Hanover, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Northampton, Rockingham and Smyth counties plus the cities of Virginia Beach, Hampton and Norfolk. USDA urges homeowners to report to federal or state plant protection officials any egg masses found. The fuzzy tan clusters, about half-dollar size, are usually found attached to the undersides of tree limbs, on logs, tree trunks, rocks, outdoor furniture and recreational vehicles. While every moth catch does not represent an established infestation, information is needed to show patterns of spread and indicate the need for further survey and control work next spring.

VIRGINIA SETS HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING RECORD as over 100,000 nimrods, young and old, have graduated from the statewide program of hunter safety courses, according to Jim Kerrick, Game Commission Safety Officer. The courses are offered to all interested Virginia residents and are presented in schools as part of the physical education program, to Boy Scout troops, 4-H clubs, church groups and to other groups whose members want to become safer hunters. The students are taught basic safe gun handling techniques, good shooting practices, hunter-landowner relationship as well as conservation and hunter responsibility. Game Commission personnel and volunteer instructors teach the courses, using movies, slides and demonstrations to present a variety of hunter safety material.

WARDEN HOTTLE WINS WILDLIFE SALES AWARD. Game Warden Fred Hottle of Shenandoah County has been chosen as the outstanding VIRGINIA WILDLIFE salesman for 1972-73 in a recently concluded contest held among the Commonwealth's 140 game wardens. Warden Hottle wins a trip to the 1973 conference of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissoners, which this year will be held in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Other winners in the contest included G. A. Wilkes of Warrenton, Joe Westbrook of Sandston, Ted Ward from Pilgrim Knob, John Heslep of Newcastle, and E. G. Mitchell of Denbigh. Game Commission Executive Director Chester Phelps presented these wardens with special volumes of National Geographic's Water, Prey and Game Birds of North America and Song and Garden Birds of North America for their efforts on behalf of VIRGINIA WILDLIFE sales.

STRIPER FISHING SHOULD IMPROVE when the half-million fingerlings that were released in July and August grow to catchable size. Of the half million fish, 334,000 were raised in Virginia hatcheries. The fish were stocked, mostly 12 per surface acre, in Smith Mountain, Claytor Lake, the two Powhatan lakes, Lake Burton, Carvin's Cove, Leesville Lake, Halifax Lake, Lake Anna, Harwood Mills, Lake Meade and Lake Prince. These fingerlings should grow to 23-inch "catchable" size in about four years.



Does The Pheasant Have A Future *in Virginia?*

By DENNIS HART
Supervisor, Foreign Game Program

WITH several months to have thought over the experiences of Virginia's last three years of hunting seasons, perhaps we should now consider how best to assure the future of this sport.

The most positive and encouraging build-up of pheasant populations appears to have been in the Valley of Virginia, although there are established populations in other regions, too, most notably in Charles City County and Eastern Shore.

Because, consistently, very few banded (stocked) pheasants were recovered by hunters, it is evident that the harvested birds were largely the progeny of initial stockings. This is a clear indication of successful brood rearing—a prime requisite of wild pheasant establishment.

Because the first two pheasant seasons, two days in November of 1970 and the same in '71, produced consistently favorable results, a full hunting week (6 days) was allowed in November of 1972. Again, consistent results were recorded. In November of 1970, the total legal harvest was 216 pheasants; in 1971 it was 224. In the 1972 six-day season, 452 of these birds were tallied at the checking stations.

Hunter comments relative to their experiences in all three pheasant seasons indicate that pheasant hunting in Virginia offers a normal challenge to hunter expertise and sportsmanship. Overall indications are that we need to learn and adapt to certain peculiarities of pheasant hunting; i.e., pheasants should be hunted at a faster pace in order to induce flight in place of running. Close working spaniels or specially trained pointing dogs give best results with pheasants. Many good quail dogs learn quite quickly to handle pheasants differently in order to foil them in ground escape.

Again, in the 1972 season, interviewed hunters in general expressed themselves as liking the open season, wanting more pheasants, and wanting a longer season. And the Game Commission has approved another six-day season for November of this year.

Other states where good pheasant hunting has become an every-year experience have all gone through periods of initial stockings, limited harvests, and final population emergence. An article by Bob Morris, reprinted in the January 1963 issue of *Virginia Wildlife*, sets forth a typical example. Pheasant stocking in his state of Nebraska was started in the early 1920's with the first season coming in 1927. However, it was about twenty years before natural selection in Nebraska's habitat brought forth a strain of pheasants that could produce harvestable annual populations without the aid of supplemental stockings. Mr. Morris reports that "the upswing began in 1950 . . . ," and, continuing from his report, "Since 1958 Nebraska hunters have consistently harvested over a million pheasants a year."

Fortunately, it is proving possible to shorten the time necessary for evolving locally adapted strains. This is being done by obtaining initial breeding stock from climates and habitats that most nearly resemble what Virginia has to offer. We have been stocking mainly Japanese green pheasants and strains of Iranian blackneck pheasants. These were selected on the basis of their "characteristics, habits, reproductive capacity, resistance to predators and disease, relationship to agriculture, ability to withstand heavy hunting pressure, and the possibility of competition with game species native to the United States" (from Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Report No. 130).

Wherever we can observe that brood rearing and overwinter survival follows from our stockings, we can feel sure that with reasonable care and protection there is a good chance the pheasants will be able to evolve a locally adapted strain and build up huntable and self-sustaining populations over a few years' time. However, excessive dispersal remains a common factor in initial stockings, continuing with lessening impetus into immediately following generations.

Since the Game Commission's stocking program and

PHEASANT HARVEST BY COUNTY FOR 1970, '71 AND '72 IN VIRGINIA

County	1970	1971	1972	County	1970	1971	1972
Accomack	3	1	4	Nansemond	0	1	0
Alleghany	0	0	1	Nelson	6	1	1
Augusta	8	3	16	New Kent	1	0	1
Bath	0	3	2	Northampton	12	12	7
Botetourt	2	0	2	Northumberland	4	0	3
Buckingham	2	0	0	Orange	0	0	1
Carroll	0	2	0	Page	63	87	170
Charles City	13	10	16	Powhatan	0	0	1
Charlotte	1	0	0	Prince William	0	0	3
Chesterfield	1	0	0	Rappahannock	2	0	0
Clarke	0	0	1	Richmond	0	1	1
Culpeper	1	0	0	Rockbridge	0	0	3
Cumberland	1	1	0	Rockingham	18	32	47
Fauquier	2	0	2	Scott	0	0	2
Hanover	1	0	0	Shenandoah	20	21	60
Highland	0	1	0	Smyth	0	0	2
James City	0	0	1	Stafford	0	2	0
King George	1	0	2	Warren	0	0	1
King William	0	0	3	Westmoreland	0	1	2
Lancaster	5	5	6	Wise	3	0	7
Lee	0	0	1	Wythe	1	0	5
Loudoun	50	41	76				
Louisa	0	0	1	TOTAL	221	225	451

facility is geared to the production of quality seed stock rather than a quantity adequate for blanketing the state, a most important adjunct is the enlistment of support and cooperation in every possible way from the public and from private enterprise.

First, it would appear, we ought to encourage our hunting acquaintances to protect pheasants most carefully when the season on them is closed and to hunt them systematically during the season when pheasant shooting is allowed. Hunt cocks only. Save the hens; this is crucial. Pheasants mate in a ratio of one cock bird to as many as ten or more hens. Report every pheasant killed. This will enable us to effectively evaluate the results of our stockings.

Become an enthusiastic pheasant hunter. Learn how really rewarding and enjoyable pheasant hunting, shooting, and eating can be. Keep in mind the various reasons for introducing pheasants to Virginia. Basic is the fact that large areas of Virginia are so extensively and intensively farmed that our native quail and rabbits have been pushed into the more limited woods edges and idle corners. Pheasants have demonstrated in the northern states that they can inhabit the larger and more cultivated fields which our native species find no longer suitable.

One of the finest ways in which you as a sportsman can work for better hunting is to adopt a farm and work with the farmer in improving game habitat. Members of Virginia Farm Bureau have officially recognized game as a farm crop. This means that instead of posting their lands against hunting, they will be systematically producing game for hunters to harvest, especially if they are properly encouraged to do so.

Public and sportsman interests point to two primary needs: (1) augmenting of annual crops of game and (2) opening up of more land to hunting.

Encouragement of private game breeding and shooting preserve operations, to include put-and-take pheasant shooting on private land, can go a long way toward meeting both of these primary needs. This offers the best chance for breaking the bottleneck of inaccessibility of hunting on private lands. Leadership for private game farming can be furnished by the state, in the form of demonstrated game breeding techniques and strains of breeding stock superior to any heretofore available for use in Virginia.

By our providing new and acclimatized stock to preserves and breeder birds or breeder stock to game farmers, we stand to greatly enhance or increase the stocked localities, the overall numbers, and so hasten the day when the gaps in between stockings will be completely overspread.

Our main goal, of course, is widespread pheasant establishment for general hunting. We can all help to build up pheasant populations in Virginia as has been done in the northern states, where from initial harvests barely in the hundreds pheasants are now harvested by the millions.

You may want to sharpen your knowledge of pheasants by visiting one of Virginia's licensed shooting preserves where pheasants are privately stocked under Game Commission supervision for fee hunting. Here hunting is permitted from October 1 to March 31 each year. Bag limits are related only to the preserve operator's extent of pheasant stocking. Excellent hunting can be had on well managed preserves.

Pheasants are strangers and newcomers to our fields. They must be especially well treated for the first few years of their existence here.

The future of pheasants and pheasant hunting in Virginia clearly appears to be a matter involving not only the Game Commission but also, and equally as much, sportsmen, farmers, game breeders, shooting preserve operators, and an intensifying public interest in, and concern for, the wildlife resources of the state.

Commission photos by Satterlee

Hunters report that they liked the limited sampling of Virginia pheasant hunting over the past three seasons.

A giant hemlock dwarfs the author.

RAMSEY'S DRAFT

A Step Backward in Time

By GARVEY WINEGAR
Waynesboro
Photos by the Author and Everette Mays

THE U. S. Forest Service says the unpaved road leading into Ramsey's Draft is 4½ miles long.

Maybe so, but it seems longer.

It seems longer in distance because you have to walk in and walk out. The road washed out in a number of places during the 1971 flood and hasn't been replaced.

It *is* longer than 4½ miles in time. There's probably no other place in Virginia where you can walk the same distance and get so far away from it all.

For, generally speaking, Ramsey's Draft has been untouched by time.

Miraculously, forest fires and the woodman's ax have missed this little valley as the centuries clicked off on the eternal clock.

This is the way the first homesteader and his family must have found many secluded valley pockets in the mountains of Virginia 200 years ago. These pockets were pristine, quiet, refreshing, remote.

The virgin oaks and hemlocks here—some of them more than 300 years old—saw him come, then saw him go. They're still standing today. And man, to his credit, hasn't left much of his mark of "progress" on this area.

For this reason, Ramsey's Draft is one of 28 areas in the East being considered by Congress for designation as a "wilderness area." Of the remaining 27, only two others are in Virignia. They are Laurel Fork in Highland County and James River Face in Rockbridge and Bedford counties.

At the time of this writing, no decision has been made by Congress on whether or not to pass the proposed Eastern Wilderness Act which would set aside the 28 areas in 16 states.

But whether or not Congress acts, you should know there's such a place as Ramsey's Draft in Virginia.

The proposed wilderness area covers some 6,700 acres of the George Washington National Forest in Augusta County. (Some conservation groups, including the Sierra Club, are asking for more than 15,000 acres.) Ramsey's Draft (many creeks in the area are called "drafts") can be reached by taking U. S. 250 west out of Staunton toward Monterey. The entrance, marked with a large Forest Service sign, is approximately 25 miles northwest of Staunton. Shenandoah Mountain on one side and Bald Ridge on the other forms the steep valley which is Ramsey's Draft. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club has maintained the Sexton Cabin high on Shenandoah Mountain since 1930.

Long before spring had fully arrived in Virginia this year, Everette Mays of Waynesboro and I spent a day hiking into Ramsey's Draft.

We'd been told that if we were willing to put out a little extra effort, we'd find groves of giant hemlocks six and seven feet across the trunk, towering hundreds of feet into the mountain air. In addition to a couple of

sandwiches and candy bars, we carried with us a healthy skepticism—and a tape measure. We returned to our parked car six hours later, awed by what we'd found.

First, if you plan to see the area, be prepared to walk. The all-weather road that has been used by fishermen for years (Ramsey's Draft has both native and stocked trout) is washed out in a number of places. Only a tank could get through now.

Also, you'll need rubber boots because you have to ford the creek 13 times, unless you're the world's greatest broad jumper. A pair of high-topped rubber boots will do. That's what I wore, and though the water was high in late winter, I didn't get my feet wet. The lower part of the creek will go almost dry in late summer and fall. Everette, by the way, probably set a new world record. He walked the entire 12 miles (we wandered off the road quite a bit) in hip boots.

How do we know we walked 12 miles? He had a pedometer clipped on his belt.

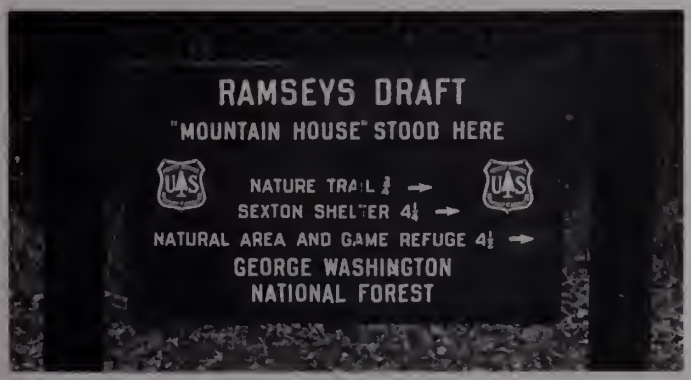
The hike is easy going. The climb is very gradual and, quite logically, is downhill all the way back.

We were puzzled to find an occasional low stump along the road. How could this be "virgin" forest if it had been logged. A Forest Service spokesman explained it to us later. In past years, harvest of timber that was diseased, damaged or had fallen was permitted.

Along the way, you may see game—deer, grouse, turkey—and then you may not. You'll probably see plenty of sign. You certainly can see where bear have scratched and chewed signs and trail markers. But the creek babbles alongside the road most of the way, and its conversation tends to hide the sound of a deer crashing through the laurel or the roar as a grouse takes off.

The pot of gold (the hemlock grove) is at the end of the rainbow—or road, in this case. We couldn't believe what we'd found.

But beauty is a subjective thing. To us, those acres and acres of giant hemlocks, hidden for centuries, said more than any man-made cathedral could say. To others, it might be just a grove of big, pretty trees—hardly worth the walk.



Settlers once lived in Ramsey's Draft, but they left few marks of their passing.

This is where the hike begins. That's Ramsey's Draft flowing through the center of the picture, and on the other side of it, the Forest Service road leading through the area.

But it you want to find them, you'll have to go a little farther than the road goes—about one-quarter mile farther, to be exact.

Take a left at the end of the road and follow a small creek. The footing is treacherous because fallen trees, the rocks, even the ground is covered with a slippery green moss. It was raining lightly the day we were there, but I got the idea that this remote section would always look like a rain forest—if a rain forest were cool.

Within 15 or 20 minutes, you should come to the ancient stand of hemlocks.

Here was history. Living history. These hemlocks, with the rain and fog brushing their boughs, had stood like sentinels while Civil War muskets rattled in the valley below. (There's an old Confederate breastwork near U. S. 250.)

While the drafters of the Declaration of Independence haggled over points of law during that hot summer in Philadelphia nearly 200 years ago, these great trees—some of them, at least—soaked up the Virginia sun and passed through a quiet adolescence.

Maybe they survived because, like all hemlock, the stony hardness of the knots will chip steel blades. But they make excellent railroad ties, don't they? The wood holds spikes like nothing else will. Why were these spared?

No matter. They're here. And if Congress sets aside this unique area as a wilderness, they'll stay.

Somehow, it seemed petty to take out the tape and measure the trunk of the trees. But we did it. Our source had been right. We found a number of trees that measured more than six feet around the trunk.

We took a few pictures, watched while the silvery green foliage of the trees rode with the wind, and left. I noticed we didn't talk very loud.

You say you don't think you'll ever be able to see the majestic redwoods of California?

Try second best. See the hemlocks of Ramsey's Draft.

Off Cape Henry they do the

Bluefish Blitz

By SONNY FENTRESS
Virginia Beach

FIFTEEN miles of beachfront had gone mad with hordes of fighting, tearing bluefish. They were schooling as far as the eye could see. Bluefish were in the breakers and beyond. They churned through the inlet in vast schools and even way out in the sound. There were acres and acres of blues. For miles the schools of baby bunkers and spearing were cast upon the beach like windrows of seaweed after a storm.

Sometimes a wave would break, and as it receded, hundreds of bluefish would lie flapping about on the sand.

The fishing boats averaged 10,000 pounds of blues to a boat for a week. They hauled them off the beach by the truckload. Everyone made money. And everyone was deliriously happy. And then the sun subsided and the fish moved north.

Never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant could anyone remember anything like it. It may come again . . . and if it does, it's hoped that they'll strike closer to the Virginia line and I want to be there with rod and reel.

This whole piscatorial incident took place in 1935 off Cape Hatteras—witnessed as the greatest run of *Pomatomus saltatrix* (bluefish) in our fishing history.

Since 1962 giant blue-choppers have been blitzing our capes and smashing our beach coast off Virginia Beach with two scheduled "timeclock runs"—one in April-May and a fall migration in October-November.

The blue is fated as a nomad of the ocean. He travels one migratory lane for several years and then, puff—he disappears. One of the most celebrated fishing contests on the East Coast is the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Bluefish Tournament which is in its 10th successful year. Tournament officials have analyzed Virginia's timeclock bluefish run and they have determined the peak runs to climax in the months of June and July.

This scribe's first introduction to the blue denizens was in 1962. Our party consisted of Gerald Hofstede, Jim Rook, Pac Romeo, Buck Fentress and myself. Captain Josh Vaughn, the knowledgeable fishing guide on the giant fish trap, the Chesapeake Bay and the sometimes turbulent Atlantic Ocean, had been selected as our charter.

Our plans had been laid, and once our party had rendezvoused aboard the "Sunny V," Vaughn's 40-foot fish-cruiser, the question was tossed out, "Who picked up the bait?" It had been decided that on this memorable day our destination would be the world-famous Cabbage Patch off Cape Charles, Virginia. Target fish for the day would be that battling cobia, which the Indians referred to as the crab-eater.

Well, as fate would have it, no one had remembered to pick up the bunker or menhaden, the cobia's favorite dinner. "Would you like to try for dolphin or blues?" inquired the affable skipper. We all nodded our agreement with little enthusiasm.

As the Sunny V trailed a wake parallel to the historical Cape Henry site, we discussed the settlers that first landed on this beach. "Just think, if it wasn't for the Indians we couldn't enjoy those delicious oysters we get from the rivers." The angler continued to relate his knowledge of this landing: "Can't you just picture those Indians all huddled around a big campfire roasting succulent oysters when up pops Captain John Smith and his gang of settlers from the surf, all armed with blunderbusses. Then, Indians fleeing—frightened by their first sight of white men—the settlers begin checking out the campsite. First one man and then another begins to sample the tasty hot-roasting oysters."

Our friend's dissertation on oysters and the settlers began to fade into the background as the mate began to break out five to six foot standard trolling rods. Each rod was mounted with a Penn 4/0 reel, packed with 250 yards of 50-pound test monofilament secured to three feet of steel leader which, at this time, was baited with an assortment of nylon jigs.

IGFA, facts keeper on official world record fish, specifies 30-pound test line to be comparable for a 4/0 reel. When fishing for big blues or choppers, the angler must remember that the cheapest part of his rig is the line. And the best on the market can't be any too good when fighting a brawny blue-battler, or any other big fish. As a rule, most big fish are lost due to pilot error and the next in line for fish losses is the parting of the line.

From the long ride and the monotonous rolls, our fishing group had dozed off into slumberland. As we approached the now famous Black and White Buoy, some 24½ miles off Cape Henry, our sleep was disrupted by screaming reels as we awakened to see our poles bent like bows as they strained in the rod holders.

As the alarm sounded like the clanging of a fire station alert for a four-alarm fire, chaos broke out that would've made a second-grade school fire drill look like a crack, close-order-drill military team.

Anglers raced for the straining rods watching line scream out as it melted into the blue ocean. First one angler and then the next "braked" his blue in an attempt to turn the powerful choppers. Success was rendered as the blues began to jump and break surface in an effort to fling the 9/0 hook that was jammed into their gums.

Dip nets and gaff were tossed aside as the mate fought to capture the snake-like steel leader. Once this was accomplished, in one sweeping movement, the leader and fish were swung over the transom. Someone grabbed for a leaded-billy as the thrashing blue began to wreck the fish box. A swift conk on the bean performed the "coup de grace" as five delirious fishermen danced a "bluefish jig" as they witnessed what is now known as the birth of blues in Virginia's piscatorial history.

Some fishermen ponder the term "chopper" when referring to the giant blues, but an 1874 report from the United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries spells it out explicitly.

Professor Spencer E. Baird stated, "There is no parallel in the point of destructiveness of the bluefish among the marine species on our coast, whatever may be the case among some of the carnivorous fish of South American waters.

Bluefish day for Virginia Beach Sand Witches—one of the largest female fishing clubs on the East Coast.

Lil Pisani boats a whopper-chopper off capes.

"The bluefish has been well likened to an animated chopping machine, the business of which is to cut to pieces and otherwise destroy as many fish as possible in a given time."

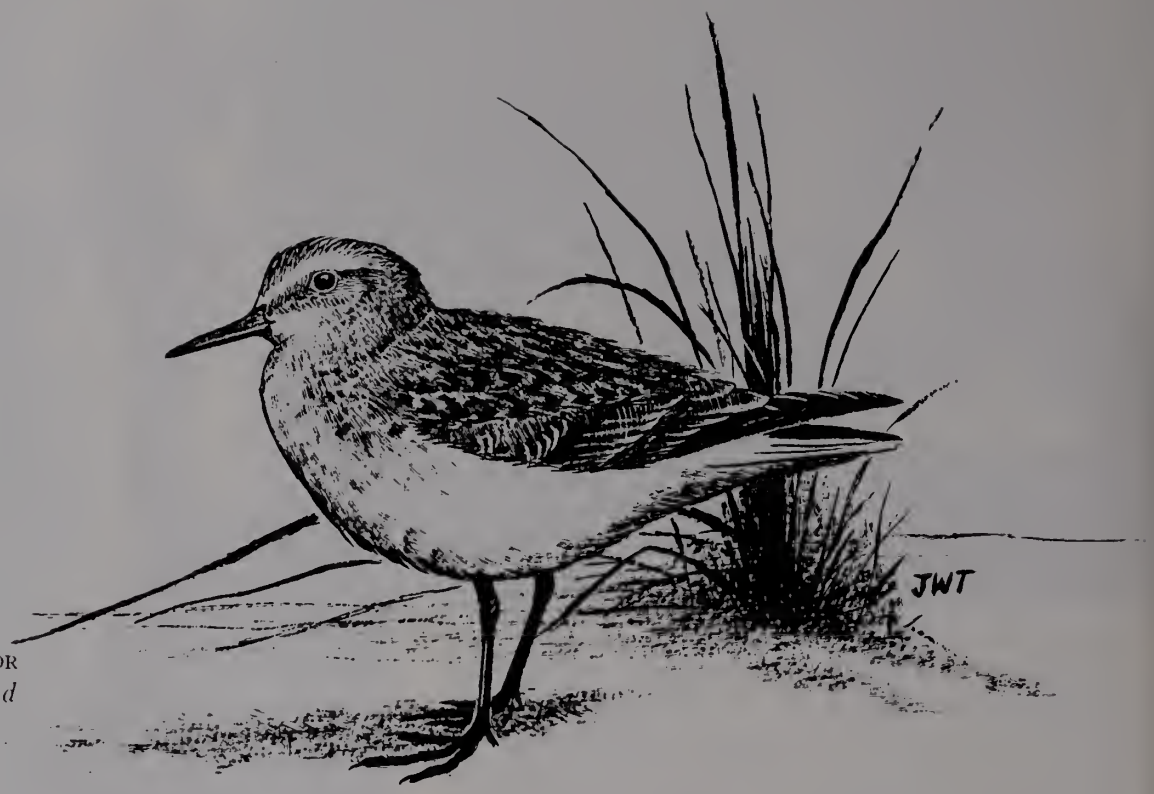
As the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Bluefish Tournament approaches its 10th phenomenal season, already anglers are becoming overwrought with what is known locally as the bluefish plague. The only known cure for this deadly disease is get aboard and head out in one of the boats at the many marinas dotting the inland rivers and inlets located throughout Tidewater Virginia.

During this writing bluefish are strung out along the coast of Virginia from what is known as the 4A Buoy off Sandbridge, around Cape Henry and in tremendous schools along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The blues are so thick in this path that one charter skipper, Fred Feller, swears he killed several as he plowed through a pod off Cape Henry.

The Virginia Salt Water Fishing Tournament again has cited 17 pounds as the respectable minimum citation weight—a long way from the six pounds that brought citation recognition back in 1962.

Thousands of bluefish citations have been awarded to anglers all over the country. And there is no doubt about it, if there is one fish that's put Virginia on the piscatorial map the jumbo chopper, Mr. Bluefish, gets the nod.

Bird of the Month:



By John W. Taylor
Edgewater, Maryland

Semipalmated Sandpiper

SEVERAL kinds of small shorebirds resemble each other closely, and tend to flock together during the time of migration. Except at short range, and under ideal conditions, it is almost impossible to separate them with certainty, so they are called, collectively, "peep." The term includes the least, semipalmated, and western sandpipers, and, if the wind is strong and the light is poor, the slightly larger Baird's and white-rumped sandpipers.

On the East Coast, the most abundant of the group are the least and the semipalmated, and, since they share the same habitat, are the most frequently confused. There are subtle differences in color, the semipalmated being the grayer, but the features to notice are the legs and the bill. The least's bill is slightly curved, and more slender than the straight, heavier bill of the semipalmated. The legs of the least are yellow-green; those of the semipalmated, blackish. (The character which gives the semipalmated its name, the webbing between the toes, is not noticeable in the field.)

Though primarily a migrant in our latitudes, the period of movement encompasses nearly half the year. The first appear early in April, and some birds remain until mid-June. Returning birds show up in July, and they are regularly seen through October. And lately there has been noticed a tendency for stragglers to winter hereabouts, making the species virtually a permanent resident.

Local observers rarely have the chance to hear the unique courtship song of the semipalmated, seldom delivered away from its tundra breeding grounds. But sometimes in late May or early June, or on warm days in fall, bits and snatches of the performance can be heard. In full display, the bird rises on quivering wings, woodcock-like, and gives a succession of bubbling trills, ending with a series of sweet finch-like notes. It then descends to the ground, where, again like the woodcock, it calls excitedly in low tones.

Its intensity is understandable. A lot of living must be crammed into the short artic summer. There is a nest to build, amid the sparse herbage of those bleak shores, and four eggs to hatch. Two weeks are required for incubation, and in four more, the young are fully fledged. Another week and they have all flown—scattered like the wind down the coasts of two continents.

These little sandpipers, whose tiny bodies could hardly constitute a mouthful, were once legal game, and killed by the thousands on eastern beaches. Its numbers were reduced until its scarcity became noticeable in the early decades of this century. It has now recovered much of its former abundance, thanks to federal protection and, most importantly, to the isolation of its breeding territory. Other shorebirds, which suffered heavily from overshooting, have never recovered because of the destruction of their prairie nesting habitat. It is a sad but striking example of the principle that game laws alone are not enough if wildlife has no place to live.

Wildlife Watching

A FAMILY SPORT

By JACK RANDOLPH
Spring Grove

THAT's fifty-three cents you owe me," announced my daughter, Patty.

"He owes me forty-eight," chimed in son, John.

"How do you figure I owe you that much?" I asked.

"Well," began Patty, "I get a quarter for that deer we saw in the field. A dime for the groundhog. That's thirty-five. I saw three squirrels at a nickel apiece and I get a penny each for those three turkey buzzards."

"OK, you win," said I, giving up. "Do you want the money now or will you wait 'till we get home?

"Oh, I'll wait," replied Patty. "By the time we get home you'll owe me twice as much."

Wildlife watching has been a family sport at our house for years. We actually started to make a family game of it on Sunday drives as a means of keeping the kids from losing interest in the ride.

To keep the game interesting I assigned values to each species. The more common the animal, the lower the value. Crows and buzzards, for example, were worth only a penny, squirrels and rabbits a nickel, and deer were worth 25 cents. A wild turkey, the prize the kids eagerly sought, was assigned a value of a whole dollar.

Sometimes on a ride I would try to emphasize a particular species of wildlife. Once, I remember, I was trying to teach the children the difference between the common turkey vulture and the less common black vulture. Early on the ride I pointed out that a black vulture has what appears to be white blotches under the wings rather than the two-tone appearance of the turkey vulture. I also explained that the black tended to soar less and flapped its wings more often. That day a black was worth a nickel as opposed to just a penny for the turkey vultures. At the end of that trip I had a couple of vulture experts on my hands.

The way we played the game I would compete against the children. If I saw the animal first I would "claim" it, and each child would lose the value of the animal from his score. The child that saw the animal first, of course, would win the points. My wife always cheated, siding with the kids against me.

Largely as a result of this game, which we played in many states and throughout much of Europe, my children have become seasoned wildlife watchers. Not only have they learned where to look to see game, but they have come to recognize the familiar patterns, the silhouettes and other clues that enable them to see wildlife others would miss entirely.

L. L. Rue III photo

My children are older now, and trying to find wildlife for pennies has lost its appeal; but now and then the kids will coax me into taking a ride just to see what we can see.

One tradition in our house is the "deer ride." We travel a set 13-mile loop near our home and keep track of the number of deer we can see. Our record is 105 deer that we counted last fall.

The time to take a deer ride is during the last hour before dark. The deer come out into the fields then and are easy to see. Using a pair of binoculars we can see far into the back fields that lie far from the road. In summer we look for the telltale sandy red of the deer's summer coat. Later in the fall the deer will turn a dusky grey.

Some folks try to see deer after dark by using a spotlight, but they miss more than they see. Many deer are in the back fields out of range of the light. Besides, it is far more rewarding watching deer feed naturally at dusk than seeing the poor things standing confused in the glare of a powerful light.

Of course, this fall it has become illegal to shine lights in fields commonly frequented by deer. A new law prohibits the shining of lights on these fields after 10 pm from October first until April first. Previously it was a violation to shine lights on fields only if a gun was carried. No gun must be present to constitute a violation under the new law.

The new law is designed to assist game wardens in the enforcement of laws prohibiting the night hunting of deer. Unfortunately for casual wildlife watchers, game violators have taken advantage of the lack of laws prohibiting spotlighting without guns and used

A prominent outdoor writer, the author, Mr. J. R. Randolph, has represented Virginia's Fourth Congressional District on the ten-member Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries since July of 1972.

this means to seek out patrolling wardens.

With a little practice it is possible to see a surprising number of wild animals and birds in the late afternoon or at dawn. If you travel the same routes regularly, you may become familiar with individual animals and birds.

Last year we found a beautiful nine-point buck with ivory antlers in one particular field. On subsequent trips we came to look for this animal and we saw him several times.

A knowledge of wildlife is very useful in becoming acquainted with the best time and places to see various species. Rabbits, for example, are fond of feeding in short grass near the roadside in the late afternoon. Sometimes the rabbits are difficult to see, but the afternoon sun shines red through the rabbit's ears making them easy to see if you are looking for them.

People who are unfamiliar with deer often visualize them as larger than they are. Often, in a fully grown soybean or wheat field all you can see of a deer is the head and eyes. Skilled watchers look for the familiar shape of the two long ears in the high growth. Because deer have no antlers from midwinter well into the spring, the ears rather than the antlers signal deer to the practiced observer.

Early morning travelers often encounter nocturnal animals returning from a night's wandering. In the spring we often see a female raccoon or skunk and their broods of young. With experience we also learn of established crossing places where deer and other creatures habitually cross the roads.

Wildlife observers also become aware of game pockets, places where wildlife seems to be in particular abundance. Such places may be a long, low swale or along the edge of a large swamp.

Birds are easily seen from the roads. Buzzards, crows and birds of prey are common sights along the highway. Both hawks and buzzards actually make a practice of following the roadways where they find creatures that have been hit by cars. Offhand I can think of two hawks I frequently see in the same place along Interstate 95. One frequents an area just south of Fredericksburg while the other favors an area on the Shirley Highway at Lorton.

Where pheasants have become established, they are often seen from the road. Generally they favor low fields close to cover. Most game will be found along the edges of fields rather than far from hiding places. Sometimes crows feeding in the field may tip off the observer that pheasants may also be present. The two often feed together.

Quail are perhaps the most easily seen game birds. They have the annoying habit of buzzing back and forth across the road at radiator-cap level.

A careful watcher will also see dozens of skinks and lizards scurrying across the back country roads. One may mistake them for leaves being blown across the road unless he looks closely.

Coastal wildlife watchers are often treated to sights of waterfowl feeding in nearby marshes or muskrats coming close to the road to feed in the mown grass. Recently, along North Carolina's Outer Banks we saw more than 20 muskrats feeding along the edge of the road.

An inherent danger in the gentle art of wildlife watching is the omnipresent possibility of hitting wild creatures with the car. Rabbits and quail have the startling habit of exploding beneath the very wheels of your car. Deer are unpredictable. When you see one along the road, you should be alert for the several more that may be traveling with it.

A deer can be expected to jump into the road at any time. Bucks are particularly vulnerable to automobiles in the early fall. This is the mating season and the normally cautious bucks are preoccupied with other thoughts and may actually challenge cars for the right of way.

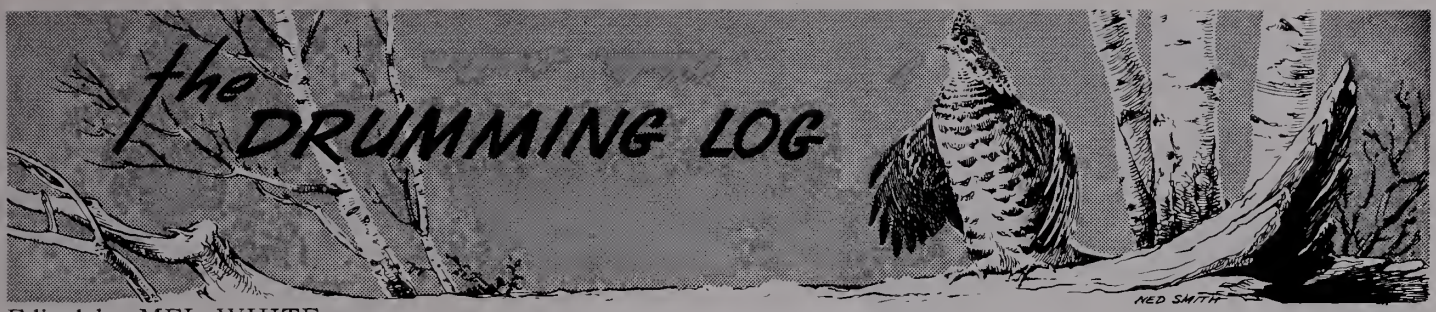
Pheasants, although strong fliers, are very often hit by cars. You will be surprised by the numbers of dead pheasants seen along the roadside in good pheasant country.

In addition to looking for live animals, we have made a practice of recording the number of dead animals we see along the roads. The toll, when you take the time to count the victims, is ghastly. It seems that opossums, raccoons and rabbits are most vulnerable to cars, but hardly a species is neglected. The high-speed interstate highways are particularly deadly. Here, even naturally cautious motorists inadvertently hit wild animals because traffic is so heavy they cannot take evasive measures.

On the back country roads there is seldom a valid excuse for hitting wild animals. Quail and rabbits are probably an exception due to their habit of darting out so close to a car.

Experienced wildlife watchers have come to expect to see game along the roads. They, through their field trips, have become aware of the likely crossings and are always on the alert for wildlife in the roads. At night the reflection of an animal's eyes is always a signal to slow down. The fact that the creature appears to be off the road is no guarantee that it won't become confused in the glare of your headlights and dart into your path.

Watching wildlife is fun. You will discover that the more you learn the more you will want to learn. Of course, if you're the driver, the wildlife you'll watch most for is the other drivers. For the most part, wildlife watching is sport for the passengers but strictly a vicarious pastime for the driver. In any event you will soon discover that you can see far more wildlife by sunlight than you will ever see by spotlight.



Edited by MEL WHITE

Game Commission photo by F. N. Satterlee

FOR SERVICE TO THE COMMISSION . . . Game Commission Chairman Dr. Allan Hoffman of Danville (right) presents a copy of *Modern Saltwater Fishing* to Past Chairman Edward E. Edgar of Norfolk, in recognition of his accomplishments while Chairman of the 10-man commission.

Virginia Leads Nation in Tree Planting

A national survey indicates that Virginia's private woodland owners are leading all other states in forest tree planting, direct seeding, and preparing areas for natural regeneration of forest trees, according to the Virginia Division of Forestry.

Survey for the fiscal year 1972 shows that 2,910 Virginia landowners planted trees on more than 49,000 acres. The state of Georgia placed second with 33,000 acres, and Alabama was third with 29,000 acres. When the planted acreages of large forest industries and government are included, Virginia ranks fourth in the nation in total acreage planted.

In the direct seeding category Virginia also ranks first in acreage planted by non-industry landowners. In second place was Missouri, with 592 acres direct seeded. Direct seeding is the sowing of forest tree seed, usually pine seed, rather than planting small trees on prepared land.

Commission Seeks New Wardens

John H. McLaughlin, Chief of the Law Enforcement Division, has announced that the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries is accepting applications from persons seeking employment as game warden trainees in the spring of 1974.

Chief McLaughlin stated that applicants interested in appointment at this time must apply by October 31, 1973, to be eligible for the spring class. Applications received after this date will be considered for the 1975 program.

Information on the necessary qualifications, duties of a game warden, and salary is available by contacting an office of the Virginia Employment Commission. The Employment Commission can also provide details concerning the steps necessary to apply.

Game Commission photo by Mel White

AWARD FOR PATRIOTIC EFFORTS . . . Chester F. Phelps, left, Executive Director of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, presents an award for Patriotic Service to Information Officer Francis N. Satterlee for his work as coordinator of the Payroll Savings Bond program for the Commission. Currently a total of 59% of all Game Commission personnel participate in the Payroll Savings plan. State-wide employee participation is approximately 40%.

Edited by ANN PILCHER

York Club Wins Ecology Award

Forty-one high school ecology clubs were named winners of the Ecology Council of America's first search to find the top youth environmental programs in the country. In May of this year, Poquoson High School's Navajo 4-H Ecology Club was named Virginia's winner. Contest entries totaled 200.

Co-sponsors of the program were Keep America Beautiful, Inc., and the Pepsi-Cola Company. Selected on the basis of community involvement, continuity and actual accomplishments, club programs ranged from production of environmental films to the establishment of a maple syrup company; from construction of an aquarium to the staging of massive clean-up campaigns. In many areas, industry, government, and citizen groups worked with students on their prize-winning projects.

On June 24-27, at ECO America's three-day youth environmental seminar held at Catoctin Mountain Park, Maryland, Tim Manning, president of the Navajo 4-H'ers, accepted a plaque on behalf of the entire club for its outstanding environmental work: area beautification, bike ecology tours, weekend camp-outs featuring wetlands programs, and paper collection for recycling.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel D. Foster, sponsors of the Poquoson club, also attended the seminar, which featured such speakers as Clifford Nash, Chairman, Youth Advisory Council, ECO America; Lloyd Curtiss, Director, Environmental Affairs, Pepsi-Cola Company; William F. May, Chairman, Keep America Beautiful, Inc.; Russell E. Dickenson, Director, National Capital Parks; and Frank Pridemore, Superintendent, Catoctin Mountain Park. The National Park Service and STEP presented classes on environmental awareness, environmental concepts, and "plan your own environment." U. S. Forest Service programs emphasized water investigation and land-use planning.

Spring Trophy

Thirteen-year-old Danny Corder shot his 19½ lb. gobbler this past spring in Fauquier County. He had brought down a buck during the fall deer season. Dan's hunting partner is his grandfather, G. M. Corder of Falls Church.

Mini-Unit Studies

Patricia Costello and Cathryn Seese at Arlington's Tuckahoe Elementary School are 1972 graduates of the 3-½ week conservation short course sponsored by the Virginia Resource-Use Education Council and taught annually at four Virginia colleges. That course includes sessions on geology, forestry, marine life, wildlife, soil and water conservation.

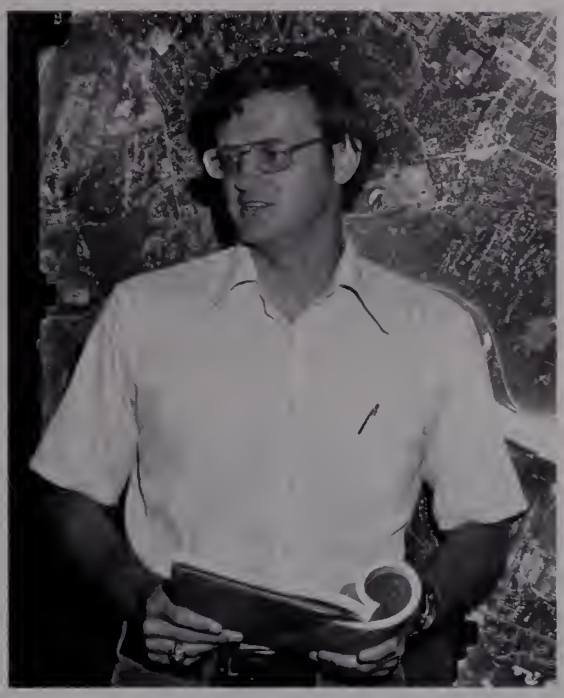
With the cooperation of four other teachers the pair planned a similar experience for Tuckahoe fourth and fifth grade students last year. Films and filmstrips obtained from the County Teaching Materials Center and from State agencies, guest speakers, and outdoor excursions—including a trip to Broad Run Outdoor Laboratory and the Massanutten Information Center—highlighted the six one-week mini-units, which included urban conservation and the five subjects listed above.

The teachers felt that understandings gained by the students made worthwhile the extra time and effort needed to coordinate the program. They felt, too, that one week per subject did not allow students enough time to pursue individual interests and will consider making each subject a two-week study this year.

Guest speakers conduct classroom in the out-of-doors for Tuckahoe Elementary School students.

Tim Manning and Mrs. S. D. Foster admire beautiful plaque earned by Poquoson High School Navajo 4-H Ecology Club.

Know your BIOLOGISTS



MITCHELL D. NORMAN
Fish Research Biologist

A native of Greene County in the northeastern part of Arkansas, Mitchell Norman grew up on a farm about 15 miles from the nearest town. His father practiced general farming on the 300 acres which he owned and rented, and Mitchell and his brothers learned about hunting, fishing and wildlife from both their father and grandfathers.

Following graduation from high school in the community of Lafe, Arkansas, he entered the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, graduating in 1968 with a B.S. in zoology and minor in chemistry. In 1970 he received his M.S. in zoology from the same institution. Following graduation Mitchell worked for a time with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fayetteville while awaiting the results of a number of job applications he had submitted earlier. In December of 1970 he was accepted for employment with the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries as a District Fisheries Biologist and was assigned to the southeastern part of the state.

Currently Mr. Norman is Fish Research Biologist responsible for, among other things, the creel census on a number of lakes in the tidewater area. He enjoys his work as a biologist, especially working outdoors with people and wildlife combined with the inside research operations which enable him to record, evaluate and prove what the field work has produced.

To date a bachelor, Mitchell lives in Chesapeake, Virginia.

Text and Photos by F. N. SATTERLEE
Information Officer

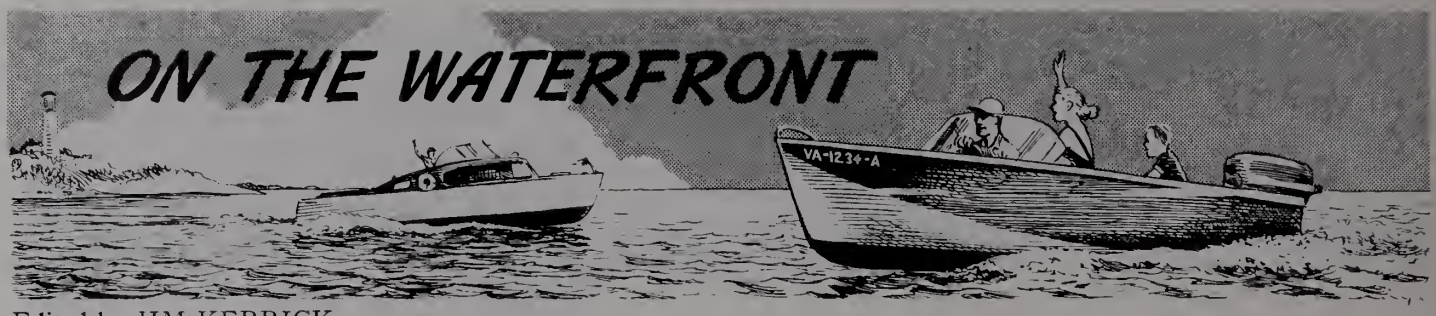
JAMES W. ENGLE
Game Commission Land Coordinator

Jim Engle is a Marylander by birth, calling Baltimore his "port" of origin. His father was a federal government employee, and while Jim was very young the family moved to York County, Virginia. At age six his family moved again, this time to Arlington County in northern Virginia. Jim graduated from Washington-Lee High School in Arlington and during those maturing years, in what was at that time still a rural area, gained a wealth of information about hunting and fishing and outdoor lore from his father. He recalls hunting squirrel near Glebe Road and the area now known as the Washington Golf and Country Club and bagging his first wild turkey in Fairfax County, accomplishments which current residents of those areas might find hard to imagine.

After graduation he entered V.P.I., majoring in forestry and wildlife. Shortly thereafter he enlisted in the U.S. Navy as an Aviation Cadet and later was commissioned in the V-12 program and served just under four years on active duty. He remained in the Naval Reserve until recently, when he completed enough time for retirement in that program.

After World War II he married the former Geraldine Tyson from Adams County, Pennsylvania, and returned to V.P.I., graduating with a B.S. in general science. He remained at V.P.I., obtaining his M.S. in wildlife conservation. During the last year of his schooling he also was on a working fellowship with the Game Commission. He became a full time employee of the Commission in 1950. During the time since, he has been a District Game Technician, District Game Biologist, Game Commission Forester, Supervising Game Biologist, and is currently Game Commission Land Coordinator. The most enjoyable aspect of his work is the personal satisfaction of having been responsible for, or connected with, a wealth of positive accomplishments in scientific game management throughout the Commonwealth.

Jim and his wife have three daughters and make their home on Route 1 in Swoope, Virginia.



Edited by JIM KERRICK

Safety Requirements

Photo courtesy Kiekhaefer Mercury

Don't overload! This, along with speed in congested areas, is probably the most ignored boating safety rule.

Make sure that you carry all the legally required safety items. This list will vary according to the size and type of boat, so if you don't know what your boat requires, ask your boat dealer, the Virginia Game Commission or call the Coast Guard. They'll be glad to tell you.

Keep a sharp eye on the weather, particularly if you venture far from shore. A storm can build up in an unbelievably short time on the water. Give yourself plenty of leeway to make it back to the dock and keep an eye out for places where you can run to shelter if the weather catches you out in the open.

BIA Boat Certification Program

If there was a plate that read "BIA Certified" on the boat you looked at at the boat show or marine dealer's, it meant that the boat has met minimum safety requirements set up by the federal government.

To provide the public with the safest products that will perform with maximum safety and satisfaction, boat manufacturers joined forces with the Boating Industry Association three years ago to launch the BIA Boat Certification Safety Program.

"BIA Certified" means that that particular boat model has been inspected and found to comply with all the applicable standards set by the federal government and by BIA.

The program works like this:

Every year, the manufacturer signs up for the program and submits every boat model he makes under 26 feet in length to inspection by an independent testing laboratory. The inspection insures that, as it leaves the factory, each model meets applicable safety regulations and additional standards BIA had determined to be essential to safety:

A *horsepower* and *load capacity* rating, based on measurements and weights, to prevent overpowering and overloading.

Adequate *flotation* built into the craft to prevent sinking in the event of a capsize or getting a hole in the boat by an underwater obstruction.

Fuel and engine compartment *ventilation system* to reduce the hazards from explosion or flammable vapors which could collect in the bilge.

Navigation lights to verify that the proper collision-avoiding information is presented to other boats at night.

Backfire flame control, attained by a properly tested and approved carburetor flame arrester.

Boats which are built and equipped in compliance with the applicable standards and regulations carry the official BIA certification plate. That plate provides assurance that the boat is designed and built to give the boater hours of safe carefree enjoyment. The certification covers only those standard factory equipment items.

More and more boatmen are making it a practice to look for the BIA certification plate when they buy a boat.

Give Assistance

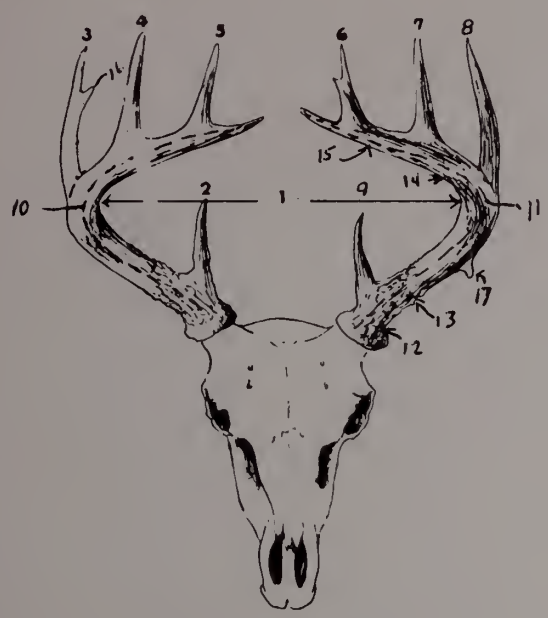
Photo courtesy Farley Manning Associates

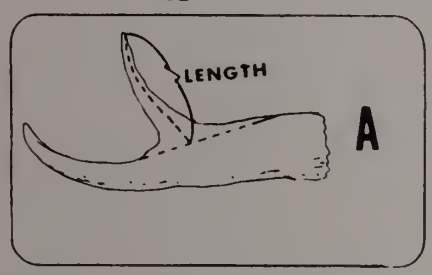
Whenever you see another boat in trouble, give whatever aid you can. This is an unwritten but universal law. Trouble aboard a boat is different from trouble on land. There is nothing that a person can do except call for help, swim for help, or try to fix the problem. Remember, someday it might be your turn to need help.

Don't desecrate the waterways by throwing refuse overboard. Even if dumped far offshore, garbage and litter will float ashore to litter beaches and harbors.

In the field of safety don't tie up to buoys and channel markers except in emergencies, and don't anchor in the middle of a channel. This interferes with traffic in the channel. Share the waterways. Others have as much right to them as you do.

How Does That Trophy Rate?





EACH year there are a number of impressive deer heads that are not entered in the State Trophy Contest because the persons who killed them feel they will surely be nosed out by a larger specimen. Consequently, one or more divisions are won by mediocre heads when larger racks are known to have been killed. In a true contest it is impossible to set up minimums for entry because average quality and number of entries varies markedly from year to year. The following procedure is recommended as a rough test for a prospective entry but is by no means intended to discourage entry of heads which do not measure up to these standards. All heads must be measured by an official measurer at the contest for final score.

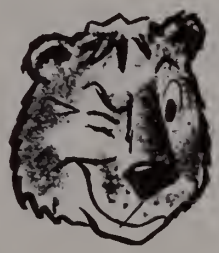
To estimate the score of your head, add together (all measurements to nearest 1/8 inch) the spread of the main beams (1) plus the number of points plus the length of all points and random prongs (2-9, 16 and 17—See insert A) plus the length of both main beams (10 & 11) and the circumference of both antlers at the burr and between all points (12-15). After totaling all these measurements and counts, subtract half the length of all abnormal points (such as 16 & 17) and one-half the difference between corresponding length and circumference measurements on one antler and those on the other.

If the rack scores 225 or better, have it officially measured for Boone and Crockett competition. (Max M. Carpenter, Route 1, Dayton, Virginia, is official measurer.) If it has 9 or more points and scores 150 or over, or if it has 7-8 points and scores 100 or over, or if it has 6 or less points and scores 50 or over, it has a good chance of placing in the Game Commission's Big Game Trophy Contest.

The contest was started in 1941 and has been held annually since. Heads are first judged in regional competition at Harrisonburg or Newport News. The state contest is held in conjunction with one of the regional events alternating between eastern and western sites. Heads must be killed during the previous season to be eligible and the entrant must furnish the Big Game tag or an affidavit from the game warden certifying the entry as a legal kill.

1973

State Big Game Trophy



DEER
BEAR
TURKEY

Contest

- There are no advance entry forms. Heads or antlers must be carried or shipped to the proper regional contest where they will be officially measured and entered. Bear skulls only need to be entered in state contest. Turkeys are scored by length of wing, tail, and beard.
- *Prizes* for regional winners
- *Trophies* for first place State winners in each Division
- plus *Honorable Mention Certificates*

The east-west regional dividing line will follow the east-west deer season line in effect the year the entry was killed.

WESTERN REGIONAL CONTEST

October 18, 19, 20
Fair Grounds
Harrisonburg, Virginia

For entry details contact

Roy W. Heishman
Harrisonburg, Virginia
Phone: 434-9957 (B); 434-2496 (R)

Sponsored by the
Harrisonburg-Rockingham
County Izaak Walton League

STATE CONTEST

October 27
Deer Park Elementary School
Intersection Routes 143 and 17
Newport News, Virginia

Virginia
Commission of Game and
Inland Fisheries

(Heads must be physically present to win.)

Only animals first entered
in regional competition are
eligible

EASTERN REGIONAL CONTEST

October 27
Deer Park Elementary School
Intersection Routes 143 and 17
Newport News, Virginia

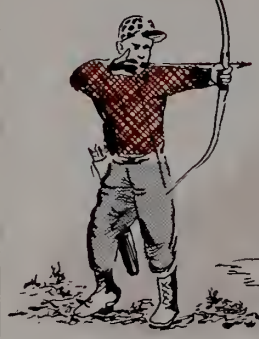
For entry details contact

Robert L. McDaniel
39 Glendale Road
Newport News, Virginia
Phone 878-3692 (B); 596-6785 (R)

Sponsored by the

Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen's Assn.

BOWHUNTING in Virginia



A comfartable stance is impartant. Stand at a right angle to the target, head turned left facing it. Hold bow in left hand.

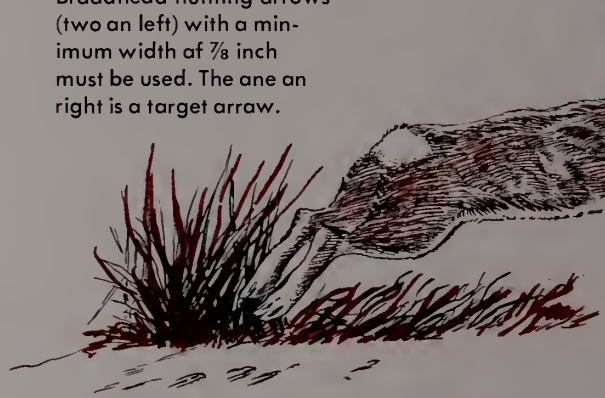
Archery Season

"Deer af either sex, bear and squirrel may be taken with baw and arraw anly (use af dogs prohibited) Octa-ber 15-Navember 15 in all counties with open deer seasons, the bag limit ta carrespond ta the number allawed in that caunty during the general seasan."

Fit the arraw an yaur bov string at the exact same place each time far better and more consistent accui

Camauflage and stealth are essential to the baw hunter. Get clase enough far a clean kill every shat.

Braadhead hunting arrows (two an left) with a min-imum width af 7/8 inch must be used. The ane an right is a target arraw.



Check the hunting laws befare you bawhunt. Be a ga spartsman.